

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6747

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 0413

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, US,JO

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN REQUEST FOR CIVIL AIR NEGOTIATIONS

REF: STATE 12417

1. THIS MESSAGE REPLIES TO REFTEL REQUEST FOR STATUS REPORT ON SUBJECT. EMBASSY FIRST BECAME AWARE OF JORDANIAN INTEREST IN OBTAINING LANDING RIGHTS IN US FOR ROYAL JORDANIAN AIRLINES (ALIA) ON SEPTEMBER 30, 1975. DURING ROUTINE AND INFORMAL CHAT WITH EMBASSY ECONOMIC OFFICER, PRESIDENT OF ROYAL ROYAL JORDANIAN AIRLINE, ALI GHANDOUR, MENTIONED THAT JORDAN WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN REGULARLY SCHEDULED AIR SERCICE TO THE UNITED STATES IN LATE 1976 WHEN JORDAN EXPECTS DELICERY OF TWO BOEING 747 AIRCRAFT GHANDOUR, IN DISCUSSION WITH EMBASSY OFFICER, REQUESTED EMBASSY'S ADVICE ON WHETHER TO PROCEED BY NEGOTIATING AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT OR BY DIRECT APPLICATION TO C.A.B. TO AVOID RATHER OBVIOUS ATTEMPT TO INVOLVE EMBASSY AS JORDANIAN AGENT IN THIS MATTER, WE DID NOT RESPOND TO GHANDOUR REQUEST FOR ADVICE, AND MATTER HAS NOT BEEN RAISED SINCE IN AMMAN.

2. INTERESTINGLY, IN DECEMBER 4 ADDRESS TO AMERICAN-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN NEW YORK, CROWN PRINCE HASSAN, IN REFERENCE TO JORDANIAN TOURIST INDUSTRY SAID, " ALIA HOPES TO INAUGURATE SCHEDULED BOEING 747 SERCICE TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1977 TO COINCIDE WITH THE OPENING OF OUR NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT."

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3. ON FACE OF IT, CONNECTION OF ANTICIPATED DELIVERY OF 747'S AND INTEREST IN SCHEDULING ALIA SERVICE TO UNITED STATES IS SIMPLY LOGICAL EFFORT TO EXPAND TOURIST SERVICES AND INCREASE TOURIST RECEIPTS. ADDITIONALLY, HOWEVER, HOWEVER, KING HUSSEIN HAS PERSONAL INTEREST IN AVIATION. FOR EXAMPLE, HE IS NOW CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY OF CREATION OF "AIR UNIVERSITY" IN AMMAN TO BECOME AVIATION TRAINING CENTER FOR ARAB MIDDLE EAST. GHANDOUR INDICATED IT WAS LIKELY THAT JORDAN WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH "HIGHEST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF JORDAN" AT HIGH LEVELS OF STATE DEPARTMENT OR WHITE HOUSE TO SECURE LANDING RIGHTS IN US. IT SEEMS TO US POSSIBLE THAT KING HUSSEIN MIGHT BE WILLING TO INTERVENE PERSONALLY AT HIGHEST LEVELS IN USG IF HE THINKS IT NECESSARY DURING FORTHCOMING (MARCH) TRIP TO THE U.S. WE ALSO EXPECT THAT GOJ WILL USE LOBBYING EFFORTS OF FORMER PANAM PRESIDENT NAJEEB HALABY (WHO IS EXPLORING A COOPERATIVE VENTURE HIMSELF WITH JORDAN AND SYRIA) AS WELL AS OF THE LAW FIRM OF CONNELE AND O'CONNELL, REGISTERED AGENTS FOR THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT IN THE U.S.

4. IF DIRECT US-GOJ NEGOTIATIONS DO NOT APPEAR PROMISING, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GOJ MAY CONSIDER EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE OF USING PLOY OF INCHOATE JOINT SYRIAN-JORDANIAN AIRLINE AS MEANS OF GAINING LANDING RIGHTS IN U.S. JOINT AIRLINES IS ONE OF MANY JOINT ECONOMIC SCHEMES BEING DISCUSSED IN WAKE OF JORDANIAN-SYRIAN RAPPROCHEMENT DURING PAST YEAR. GOJ APPEARS TO ASSUME THAT BECAUSE OF TWA LANDING RIGHTS IN DAMASCUS, SYRIA WILL QUALIFY FOR RECIPROCAL RIGHTS IN U.S. WHILE IT APPEARS THAT JORDAN AND SYRIA MAY WELL TRY TO ESTABLISH JOINT SERVICE IN ORDER TO OPERATE LARGE VOLUME BOEING 747 AIRCRAFT, IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS DEGREE TO WHICH JORDANIAN AND SYRIAN AIRLINES WILL IN FACT BECOME A JOINT ENTITY.
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